**Sooners, later**

Baker Mayfield won't be returning, but what does next season hold for the Sooners?

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**A feast of news for 2018**

The Food Dude's look at OKC's vibrant dining scene in 2018.

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# Health agency corrective plan has more layoffs, cuts

**BY MEG WINGERTER**
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A report from the Oklahoma State Department of Health shows it could slash its budget by about one-third next year through layoffs and program cuts.

If the department enacts all the proposed reductions in its corrective plan, it will cut its budget by about twice as much as the Legislature demanded, lay off 198 people and possibly end grants that support child-abuse prevention programs and health centers.

The health department has been in turmoil since at least October, when officials acknowledged it was struggling to make payroll. Then-commissioner Terry Cline and deputy commissioner Julie Cox-Kain resigned. The State Auditor's Office, a grand jury and federal officials all are investigating alleged overspending and shifting of money, possibly going back as far as 2011.

The Legislature passed and Gov. Mary Fallin signed a bill appropriating $30 million to stabilize the health department, but they also required the department to submit a corrective plan by Jan. 1 and to cut its budget by 15 percent before July 2019. To meet those requirements, the department

**SEE CUTS, 2A**

# Family mourns loss of 3 children

**The house in the 200 block of North K Avenue in El Reno where three kids died in a fire Monday.** [PHOTO BY JOSH DULANEY, THE OKLAHOMAN]

**BY JOSH DULANEY**
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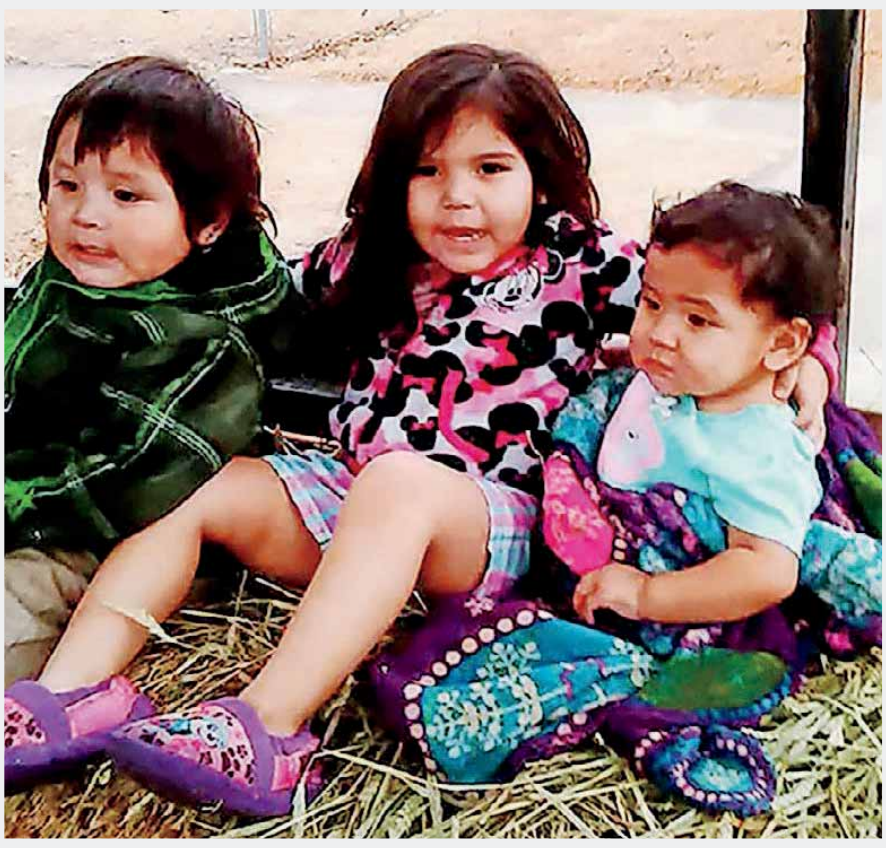
**EL RENO —** The grieving parents of three young children who died in a house fire Monday are working through the shock of their loss while thanking the community for its comfort and support.

"Our children, they were loved by many people, and they impacted a lot of people," James Redbird told *The Oklahoman*. "Little did we know that our little babies served their purpose, whatever it may be, and God called them home. We're not asking for anything. If people want to donate, that's fine. All we're asking for is prayer."

Around 6 a.m. Monday, firefighters were met in the front lawn of a house in the 200 block of North K Avenue by family members carrying the two girls — Amylah Dawn Redbird, 4, and Mayley Jean Redbird, 22 months — and a boy — Gunner Ray Redbird, 3.

Emergency personnel tried to resuscitate the children. The

**SEE LOSS, 2A**



**Three children died in a fatal fire Monday in El Reno. From left, Gunner Ray Redbird, 3, Amylah Dawn Redbird, 4, and Mayley Jean Redbird, 22 months.** [PHOTO PROVIDED]

# Ex-missionary's lawyer files disciplinary letter in appeal effort

**BY NOLAN CLAY**
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The lead federal prosecutor in a high-profile sex crimes case faced disciplinary action after an internal investigation found intolerable, unacceptable and "extremely serious" misconduct.

Don Gifford, now 47, was accused of serving his personal interests "rather than the interests of the federal government."

Many of the accusations involve — indirectly — the high-profile case against a former missionary from Edmond.

"Management has lost all confidence in your ability to act in the best interest of the United States," U.S. Attorney Mark Yancey wrote in a Sept. 12, 2016, letter. "There is no penalty other than removal that would suffice to deter such behavior in the future."

Gifford left the U.S. attorney's office shortly afterward and is now in private practice in Oklahoma City.

"I was not fired. I left voluntarily," he said Tuesday. "I received a great job offer."

Gifford was the lead prosecutor at the 2015 high-profile trial of Matthew Lane Durham. The former missionary was convicted of sex crimes against children at an orphanage in Africa. He is serving 40 years

**SEE APPEAL, 2A**

**TODAY'S PRAYER**
Almighty God, we pray for the nations of the world that they may prosper in peace. Amen.


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